

St. Johnsbury Caledonian.

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What Resolution Will Do.

BY CHARLES F. DEENS, D. D., PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE STRANGER, NEW YORK.

As you go up the main street of the beautiful town of Brattleboro, Vermont, you will see over the door of a small shop a sign—“C. Frost, Boot and Shoe Maker.” In passing the shop, at almost any time of day, you may see a plain looking man, wearing a pointed standing collar and black stock, such as were much in fashion a quarter of a century ago, and otherwise plainly dressed—as a mechanic should be. He will be doing one of three things: attending to customers, mending shoes, or sitting in a Boston rocking chair, reading or writing. Perhaps there may be a fourth thing—he may be talking to some village friend or stranger who has dropped in for a little chat. There is nothing at all striking in his appearance; but he was the man in Brattleboro whom I particularly desired to see. I did not venture to present myself, nor did I adopt the roundabout method of endeavoring to make an acquaintance by means of a little trade. I simply asked another gentleman to present me to Mr. C. C. Frost. When we met, I said: “I wish to know the man who has more friends among the educated people of Europe than he has in his native village.”

He smiled, dropped his eyes, and replied: “Well, I reckon I have more friends in Europe than I have in Vermont.”

I said: “I find that there are few in Brattleboro who know no reason why I should desire to become acquainted with you, but I am sure there are hundreds of scientific men in various parts of Europe who would be gratified to have this opportunity.”

I trust my readers will now wish to know something about this Mr. Frost in whom I was interested. He is a man who knows more about plants probably than any one else in New England—perhaps in the United States. He reads scientific books equally well in four different languages. He has, besides, a very great deal of scientific knowledge beyond botany in one department of which he is an authority for scientific men on two continents, perhaps the highest authority since the death of Rev. Dr. Curtis, of North Carolina. His knowledge is wide and accurate. He has habits of the clearest observation and description. He has been honored by being elected a member of different scientific societies in America and Europe. He did not tell me all these things, but I desired to hear from his own lips the history of his intelligent progress. It was substantially this:

His father was a shoe-maker and was the first who opened a store for selling shoes in Brattleboro. At ten years of age young Frost noticed that the older scholars brought their sums to him to “do,” and that in mathematics he was up to boys who were five years older than himself. He did not know what that meant, but his friends afterwards told him that they had discovered in him, from his first years, a considerable mathematical genius. When he was fifteen years of age his father became possessor of “Hutton’s Mathematics,” which he had taken for debt from some West Point student. Young Frost looked at it with evident delight, and his father told him it should be his property if he could read it at twenty-one. At nineteen he had mastered the whole course. He went into astronomical mathematics, took up chemistry, learned very much of natural sciences in every department, and all the while attended to his business as a shoe-maker. From some neglect of his physical habits he superinduced nervous dyspepsia. No medical skill in his neighborhood seemed able to relieve him. He went to New York to consult Dr. Willard Parker. While waiting in the ante-room, he admired tenately a very handsome bouquet of flowers on the mantle, and was examining them when the doctor called him in. Dr. Parker candidly told him that he could do nothing for him; “but,” said the skillful and honest physician, “you can do much for yourself. Are you fond of flowers?”

“Very much so indeed,” said Mr. Frost.

“Then make it a point to walk one hour in the morning and one in the evening looking for flowers.”

He did so. His health constantly and rapidly improved. At first he could hardly keep on his feet during the hour, but he soon learned to walk many miles at a time. His scientific mind naturally began to study flowers in their scientific aspects. He began to be a botanist. He ordered Frost’s book from London, and paid twelve dollars for it. He did not know until he saw it that it was written in Latin, of which tongue he was ignorant. He went into the village, bought a Latin grammar, devoted himself to the language, and in six months could read his new book as well as if written in English. In the same manner he acquired the German and the French. He has contributed to our scientific periodicals. He still writes. He showed me an unpublished manuscript on the Botany of Vermont.

On my first visit, which occupied about an hour, we were interrupted six different times. He went to the counter to cut the pegs out of the shoes of a factory girl; to sell a pair of slippers to a gentleman for his wife; to pay his trade with one or two country women, etc. He never asked to be excused, but went to his business, and came back and resumed just where he left off. He made no pretences. He did not play the part of a learned elder; he simply plunged into the things he and I wanted to talk about.

I asked him how he could be con-

tended to spend all his days in that little shoe-shop.

“Why,” said he, “it is the business of my life. Whatever I have acquired of science came in the search for health and mental entertainment. Science is not my profession—shoe-making is.” He was altogether so modest a man that I am afraid the publication of this article, if he should ever see it, may make him regret that he allowed me to become acquainted with him. My plan to him will be that there is a moral to his history which I wish to impress upon young men. He stated one fact to me worth knowing. “When I was fourteen years of age,” said he, “I resolved to devote one hour to close study every day. I have done so至今 now; and what I have learned has been learned in that daily hour, and my business has gone on all the same.”

He had barely got out of the kitchen, when the men came tearing in, crazed by excitement, and looking for their boots. “Smiten Washington! where is my boots?” shrieked Watts. And then following the example of the others, he dropped down on the floor, and began to feel around for them. Then ensued a scene that beggars all description. Ten men in a dark room, spasmodically and insanely endeavoring to get into a pair of boots belonging to other parties, and each one carefully tinging the wrong boot straight ahead, and scratching for another, and swearing and screaming all the time, and hopping round on one foot, and bumping each other over, like so many unhappy and incurable maniacs. Some two or three seemed a boot apiece and started for the mill; others went entirely unprotected; while old Watts, with a presence of mind that was truly remarkable, gathered up an armful of them, and went bounding across that corn lot with the speed of an alligator.

To C. C. Frost’s science has been its own exceeding reward; and it would be so to all other men, according to their several capacities.—*Baldwin’s Monthly.*

Early Martyr.

BY THE DANBURY NEWS MAN.

As this account pertains mostly to the rag-wheel of a saw-mill, there may be people who will think I ought to know what a rag-wheel is, and be able to throw a good deal of interesting light on its origin and history. Fortunately, I don’t know anything about it. A rag-wheel may be some part of the floor of a saw-mill, or adapted to its roof, or only something to keep the boys from fooling with the saw. I know nothing about it. I only know that this is a sad account to write, and that, like the public would much rather that some one else would do it.

The owner of the saw-mill in question was Abel Pierce. He was a man who was fond of hunting foxes, and kept eight men employed about his farm and mill. The rag-wheel became impeded and misfire from age or wear, or both, needed replacing, and he employed a carpenter from a place twenty miles distant to make a new rag-wheel.

The carpenter who came twenty miles to make a rag-wheel for Abel Pierce, was a stranger to that gentleman. His name was Zebulon Watts. He brought a man with him to do the work, volunteering to attack the bossing of the job single-handed and unaided. Watts was mentally and physically remarkable. He was not a worker, but a designer. He could plan work for any number of men to perform, and stand around handily to see that they did it. He was a man fond of the law, and when a party refused to pay him for work, his delight was almost hysterical. He then sued them, plead his case, and won. But all efforts were vain. The party turned and limped home. Mr. Watts went for his coat and was somewhat startled to find that the fire had even attacked the pile of slabs, and in its insatiate fury had completely devoured the tail to the coat.

Then Mr. Watts lifted up his voice and carried on like a pirate.

It is not necessary to state that the rag-wheel went up with the flames. It went. Mr. Watts returned home with his man, the next day, and in the seclusion and sacredness of the domestic circle made out his bill against Pierce.

Pierce refused to pay it. Watts was delighted. Pierce said the wheel was but a piece of bench-work. Watts said he would make him prove it. And he did. The suit went against Watts. He argued and plead, and persisted, and pranced around, but it was no use—a venial judge decided against him.

Then there was another unfortunate phase to this remarkably painful affair. Not another piece of cloth could be found in town to match that ravaged coat. Unconsciously did Watts parade the stores of his native hem, but in vain—piece after piece of goodness compared to it was the unsinged tail of that coat. Nothing would match. The surviving tail was a peculiar green and the neatest approach to it was a peculiar blue; and so Watts had to get it, because he couldn’t afford to lose the coat, and, besides, the one tail was becoming a trifle monotonous to the public.

The new repairs created quite a sensation at first among the neighbors, but it gradually wore off, and whenever he appeared with his rainbow tails, and that coarse cap with its threatening forepiece, they merely observed—“Hello! here comes the Jack of Clubs!”

He took charge of the manufacture of that rag-wheel without the confidence in the world, and laid his plans, and made his estimates, and set the men to work getting out the stuff, and walked around with his hands in his pockets, and talked about religion and the legislature.

And so day passed into day and time rolled on.

On the evening preceding the close of the job, Pierce, as was his custom, had all his help, including the carpenters, in the large, old-fashioned kitchen. It was cold November night, and a large and very grateful fire roared and snarled in the yawning fireplace. The men sat there until ten o’clock, talking about fox hunting and public schools, and then retired to their respective couches, each man drawing off his boots and leaving them in front of the fireplace. In a short time the house was as quiet as a pot of paint, and the flicker of the dying fire created fantastic shadows among the eleven pairs of boots.

At two o’clock one of the men was awakened by a glint of light in his eyes, and bounding to the window saw that the mill was on fire. The alarm was at once given. Pierce heard it, and was the first in his clothes. Then he darted for the kitchen to get his boots. He was a man of great nervous susceptibility, and not at any time unpleasantly particular about his language. It was very dark in the kitchen—so dark that but a dim outline of the walls could be seen. But he was in a hurry—there was no time to strike a light. He made a plunge for the first boot he could reach, tried it part way, discovered it was originally made for another man, flung it across the room, and swooped down on another. No better success. Three that, and swore. Grabbed another. Swore again. Made several attempts to get his foot into the third boot. Foot kept slipping

outside. Three that, and swore again. Fourth boot had no straps to it. Dropped that at once. Then he tried once more; kept trying them as rapidly as he could find them, and all the time his property was being licked up by the dreadful flames, and the perspiration was rolling into his eyes, and his feet were smarting under the exertions they were forced into. And all the while he kept pouring forth the most ridiculous cursing anybody ever heard, and finally, in a perfect shriek of profanity, he dashed out of the house in his stocking feet, and across a corn field full of bursting stables, and shed woolen yarn and blood at every jump.

He had barely got out of the kitchen, when the men came tearing in, crazed by excitement, and looking for their boots.

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